

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of inhibiting formation of an atherosclerotic lesion comprising administering to a mammal a compound that reduces expression of AFABP.
2. A method of inhibiting formation of an atherosclerotic lesion in a mammal, comprising identifying a mammal in need of said inhibition, and introducing to said mammal a compound that reduces expression of AFABP.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein said compound inhibits transcription of said AFABP.
4. The method of claim 1 wherein said compound binds to a cis-acting regulatory sequence of said AFABP.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein said compound inhibits expression of said AFABP in macrophages but not in adipocytes.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein said compound inhibits expression of said AFABP in adipocytes but not in macrophages.
7. The method of claim 3, wherein said inhibitor is an antisense nucleic acid.
8. The method of claim 7, wherein said antisense nucleic acid molecule comprises at least 10 nucleotides the sequence of which is complementary to an mRNA encoding an AFABP polypeptide.
9. The method of claim 7, wherein said antisense nucleic acid is a DNA operatively linked to a macrophage-specific promoter, wherein transcription of said DNA yields nucleic acid product which is complementary to an mRNA encoding an AFABP polypeptide.
10. The method of claim 1, wherein said compound is introduced into an artery of said mammal.
11. The method of claim 1, wherein said compound is locally administered to a site of an atherosclerotic lesion in said mammal.
12. A method of inhibiting differentiation of a macrophage into a foam cell, comprising contacting said macrophage with an inhibitor of AFABP expression.
13. A method of inhibiting formation of an atherosclerotic lesion comprising administering to a mammal a compound that reduces activity of AFABP.
14. The method of claim 13, wherein said compound is an AFABP-specific intrabody.
15. The method of claim 13, wherein said compound is introduced into an artery of said mammal.

1 16. The method of claim 13, wherein said compound is locally administered to a site of an
2 atherosclerotic lesion in said mammal.

1 ~~17.~~ A method for identifying a compound which inhibits development of an atherosclerotic
2 lesion, comprising the steps of:

3 (a)contacting AFABP with a fatty acid in the presence of a candidate compound; and
4 (b) determining the level of AFABP binding to said fatty acid, wherein a decrease in
5 said level of binding in the presence of said candidate compound, compared to the level of
6 binding in the absence of said candidate compound indicates that said compound inhibits
7 development of an atherosclerotic lesion.

1 ~~18.~~ A method for identifying a compound which inhibits development of an
2 atherosclerotic lesion, comprising:

3 (a) providing AFABP with a fatty acid bound thereto to form a complex;
4 (b) contacting said complex with a candidate compound; and
5 (c) determining whether said candidate compound decreases the binding of AFABP to
6 a fatty acid in said complex as an indication of the ability of said candidate compound to
7 inhibit AFABP binding, wherein a decrease in said level of binding in the presence of said
8 candidate compound, compared to the level of binding in the absence of said candidate
9 compound indicates that said compound inhibits development of an atherosclerotic lesion.

1 ~~19.~~ A method for identifying a compound which inhibits AFABP expression in a cell,
2 said method comprising the steps of:

3 (a) providing a cell that expresses AFABP;
4 (b) culturing said cell in the presence of a candidate compound; and
5 (c) determining the level of expression of a AFABP in said cell, wherein an increase
6 in said level of expression in the presence of said candidate compound compared to the level
7 of expression in the absence of said candidate compound indicates that said candidate
8 compound inhibits AFABP expression in said cell.

1 20. The method of claim 20, wherein said cell is a macrophage.

1 21. The method of claim 20, wherein said cell is an adipocyte.

1 ~~22.~~ A method for determining the ability of a candidate compound to inhibit binding of
2 AFABP to an intracellular ligand in a macrophage, said method comprising the steps of:

3 (a) providing a macrophage that expresses AFABP;

4 (b) culturing said macrophage in the presence of said candidate compound; and
5 (c) determining the level of fatty acid binding in said macrophage, wherein an
6 decrease in said level of binding in the presence of said compound, compared to the level of
7 binding in the absence of said compound, is an indication of the ability of said candidate
8 compound to inhibit AFABP/fatty acid binding in a macrophage.

1 23. A method for determining the ability of a candidate compound to inhibit binding of
2 AFABP to an intracellular ligand in an adipocyte, said method comprising the steps of:

3 (a) providing an adipocyte that expresses AFABP;
4 (b) culturing said adipocyte in the presence of said candidate compound; and
5 (c) determining the level of fatty acid binding in said macrophage, wherein an
6 decrease in said level of binding in the presence of said compound, compared to the level of
7 binding in the absence of said compound, is an indication of the ability of said candidate
8 compound to inhibit AFABP/fatty acid binding in an adipocyte.

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